



## **Start of Gerda Martel Collection**

### **AR 6713**

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Gerda Martel

AR 6713

A 40/2

~~REMOVED TO PHOTO FILE~~  
F - FORTRESS, WOOD, MATERL, GEN. ②  
②

you prefer the German?

But while going through my files I found another 'article'  
I wrote "Germany Revisited" + lateron translated into German  
for the benefit of my former school mates. (The 'diary' of  
Nov. 1933, of course, was written in German--lateron trans-  
lated into English for the benefit of my children.)  
You may find certain parts of it also interesting, therefore  
I take the liberty to enclose it as well." (Part II & III)

And last, but not least, permit me to enclose an  
article I wrote 'commemorating' my Mother. I think it shows  
'where I come from'.... Liepmannsohn  
Mother: Susette Freund, geb. , geb. 4.Juli 1890 Berlin  
gest. 12.3.42 Ravensbrück

I shall be looking forward hearing from you and giving me  
a little more insight as to your Institute.

Sincerely,

Frieda Martin

+ that is "Germany Revisited" Pg. 5.

Not knowing whether your Institute only is interested in matters of a Jewish nature, I shall not enclose an essay I wrote at age 14 "Deutsche Jugend in Not". Every time I have re-read it, or shown it to others, we agree that my humble opinions expressed as a 14 yr old still (unfortunately) hold true; meaning that little has changed in 60 years! And that the problem of employment is universal!

April 2, 1994

Leo Beck Institute  
New York

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Some time ago I mailed a copy of a partial diary of mine, written in Berlin in 1933 when I had just turned 17, to Sylvia Tennenbaum, of E. Hampton, the Jewish writer, who like me emigrated to the USA in 1938. It was she who suggested I send you this copy. If only it was not so short. In retrospect, I can not explain why I did not continue. Actually, I can not recall what happened to my diary into which I know I made later entries of a more personal nature. Could be that it got 'left behind' (no...not in Germany) in Mexico when I left for the Canary Islands--at that time not knowing I would like it here so much never to return to Mexico, but that's another story.

DIE SCHÖNSTE LENGEVITCH

DER TAG

Der Mai iss gekommen,  
Die Leut' moveh aus;  
Und ich und die Ma ziehn  
Auch in a neu' house.

Die barrels mit dishes  
Sein alle gepackt,  
Und die pitschers und books  
Auf die tables gestackt.

Die beds und die dressers  
Sein auch downgeknockt.  
Die chest und der trunk  
Sein geroped and gelockt.

In fact, wir sein ready,  
Was das anconzernt.  
Neun P. M., und's Gas schon  
Since noon abgeturned.

Neun P. M.! Und noch von  
Die Movers kei' Seel'!

[ 20 ]

DIE SCHÖNSTE LENGEVITCH

Wo faithful gepromised:  
"Bei Noon mitaus Fail!"

Die Ma hat a headache,  
Mei Stomach fühlts queer.  
Hol' der Teufel die Movers—  
Und drop sie in here!

THIS IS A LITTLE 'EXTRA' in a funnier vein.

This is from a book published in 1925 by one of the many  
German immigrants. I hope you'll enjoy it as much as I have.  
Of course, only a person who knows both English and German  
can appreciate it!

[ 21 ]

DIE SCHÖNSTE LENGEVITCH

ISS PROGRESS FORTSCHRITT?

Der alten Missis Schmatz ihr Enkelkind,  
A Coedgirl with horngerimmtten Shpees,  
Geshtuff mit Knowledge, aber shy an Sex  
Besucht die Grandma during der Vacation.  
Ich lissen mit mei Ears zurückgepinned  
Von der Front Shtoop zu ihrer Conversation.

"Well, Kind, was tun sie Euch denn alles teacheh.  
Dort auf der grossen University?"  
"Oh, alles, Grandma. Xenophon and Nietzsche,  
All kinds von Languages und History.  
Ich hab in Sciences geshpecialized  
Und major dies' Jahr in Biology.  
Das iss a Field! So vast! Du wärst supprized  
Was für Improvements die Professors mache'.  
Why, es iss nowadays a simple Sache  
Life artificially zu reproduceh!"

"Is dat so! Golly, das iss wunderbar!"  
Sagt Grandma, "Shtill, mich tät 's net so enthuseh.  
Of course, 's iss upzudate, das iss ja wahrt.  
But, after all (sie heaved a couple Sighs),  
Der alte Weg, ach, der war doch so nice."

[ 102 ]

DIE SCHÖNSTE LENGEVITCH

SO-NET ZU MEI READERS

Wenn ich suckseeded hab a shmile zu raiseh  
Auf Grund wo formerly zu trocken war,  
Fühl ich so happy als wenn auf der Car  
Bei'm Morning Rush a Seat wär frei gewese'.  
Drum tut mich auch kei Kritizism fezech:  
Ich heis' net Keats or Heine, das iss klaat.  
'S macht ennyhow kei difference in a Jahr  
Tut man mei Ferses knocke oder praiseh.  
Ich hoff dass Schmiles wo ich gesowed hab, bleibe',  
Zum starken Habit wachse', und die Blues  
Und Grouches ganz for gut und all vertreibe'.  
Dem Devil, even, händed man sei Dues.  
So, wenn ich auch nur Foolishness tu schreibe,  
Hab ich doch ennyhow a gut Exkuhs.

[ 103 ]

I think maybe another footnote is in order,  
To explain how I happen to be enrolled from 1932 - 1934  
in the Städtische Höhere Handelsschule.

From 1926 - 1932 I was in the Städtische Höhere Waldschule and graduated with what was then called "das Einjährige". (Untersekunda) To make the "Abitur" you needed 3 more years. (Obersekunda, Unterprima, Oberprima.) It was not until the following year, that the school could give degrees of "Abitur" which then enabled a student to enter a university. But already in 1932 when I graduated, rumors spread that as a Jewish student you would most likely have no chance to be admitted for 'higher learning'. So, my mother decided it best to prepare me for a secretarial 'career'. Actually I wanted to become a language teacher or a librarian or interpreter. Having spent 6 years in a co-educational school (the first and only in those days) it was difficult for me to adjust to the more formal environment and to being just with GIRLS. It turned out I was the only Jewish girl in the class, but although we already had to use the "Heil Hitler" raised arm greeting, I have no recollection if I did, or was made to do it. In all honesty, I have to say, though, that in the 2 years, I did not experience any unpleasant confrontations with my class-mates. However, I recall that "Rassenkunde" was taught with emphasis, of course, on the pure Aryan race!

If you have any question, you may contact my daughter in NYC.  
Diane Downey, of Diane Downey Associates (Management Consultants)  
212-477-5301.

And - to complete my family 'history'. My father was Karl Freund, famous cinematographer (winner of an Oscar for the 1937 movie THE GOOD EARTH - with Luise Rainer, Paul Muni) Before he left Germany for Hollywood in 1929, he worked with Fritz Lang in "Metropolis", also Emil Jannings in "Der letzte Mann" (The Last Laugh) After 20 yrs. with MGM, he was the Dir. of Photography for the 'I love Lucy' show. I am an only child and my parents were divorced when I was very young.

By the way, - I wrote an article "I JUST WENT ALONG FOR THE RIDE" which explains how I happen to 'land' here on the Canary Island of Tenerife, 'Ojibago'. I hope you will forgive me for the uncoordinated way this letter turned out. On the outset I thought a short covering letter was all I was going to write. - wrong.

Sincerely  
Gerda Marte

**URI**

TRANSLATION OF EXCERPTS FROM  
Diary of [REDACTED]

Gerda  
Gerda (Freund) Martel

Nov 10, 1933

At the occasion of Hitler's speech I became quite conscious of the fact that I must have a "Vaterland" and really do consider Germany as my "fatherland". After all, how much did Germany give to me. If not even the country in which you were born is your homeland, then what is? "One who does not honor his homeland is not worth happiness in his homeland". When I travel abroad I shall always say, I am a German! Yet here in Germany I am considered a foreigner! If times had not changed I would not now, same as before, join a Jewish club, and specially not one with only girls. That many Jewish girls together I cannot take. And besides I do not like rich (often still naive) girls. I simply would not like joining such a club since I am used to other clubs and other type of people.

Nov. 12, 1933

Today is the day of the deciding election regarding to the governments' acts taken at Geneva, namely with respect to withdrawal from the League of Nations and the leaving of the disarmament conference. I doubt if anyone will learn the true outcome. Countries around do know that freedom of expression and freedom of the press does not exist any more. If Hitler would not be against the Jews one could find it almost possible to be for him. But with "their" views on literature, art, theater, film, morals, education, customs, religion and dance, I simply cannot agree. It goes so completely against my views. Since I grew up with these views, I cannot change. The way one looks at things is already inscribed with one's self making it impossible for me to change my mind about all these issues. This is the basis for the life of my inner self. To become or think like 'them' I would have to change my total basis for living. One could do it but one would be a different, changed, -- a different core with the same shell.

11/13/33

I found out today that Inge is abroad in Riga to learn farming. Wouldn't it have been a good idea to undertake such a thing together. Of course this is really meant for Palestine although I doubt that I shall go to Palestine, it could not hurt to learn. Sooner or later I may need it. Am I really suited for an office, the person I am, - frankly no! I would have wished something better for myself. But what? Photography perhaps; the theater might have been nice for me but now this is out of the question for Jews now!

Today at school I came across a book about contemporary writers (expressionism); looks like a good book. This only shows that once they were wellknown and considered among the best....and many Jews among them! (Leonard Frank, Ernst Toller, Morrenstern, Arthur Schnitzler, Franz Werfel, etc. That they know their craft and that the "new" German writers can in no way keep up with them, is something noone can talk me out of.

11/15/33 Mr. Lindner was here today. He is very entertaining and it only goes to show that people who think cannot help discovering matters which do not go hand in hand with their "Weltanschauung" (universal beliefs ?), yet, <sup>those</sup> represent the basis for National Socialism. What Mr. Lindner knows, I wish I could put into words as accurately in order to make it clear to every National socialist. As it is, I have to let people talk without being able to come up with something positive in way of a counter-statement. When girls are ignorant it is easy to believe everything the teacher tells them; on the other hand it is easy for the teacher to hammer it in since most girls do not know the opposite views (cons). What Mr. Lindner was saying about subjects like

Church  
Marriage  
Interference into personal freedom  
(civil liberties)

is also my opinion.  
If he thinks I seem to be a National Socialist, he might assume this based on some of my statements, however, the "new state" wants to indoctrinate people from an early age, which in my case would not be possible as my beliefs are deep rooted so that in the truest sense of the word it would be impossible for me to be a "Nationalsozialist". (aside from the fact that I am a Jewess.)

Nov. 15, 1933(Cont'd)

I think sooner or later many girls will have to think about why they  
are no longer in charge of their own bodies.  In this respect it is very  
much like in Russia where children do not belong to their parents but  
to 'the State' (and its ideology). This is how it is here! Little boys  
are put into uniforms and raised for the National Socialist system,  
without their own beliefs. About the pros and cons I could talk for  
hours if I had made notes about everything various people tell you (different  
angles one does not always think of by oneself.)

Dec. 7, 1937

In school we talked about 'the Woman in the National Socialist State' not  
having voting rights any longer. A girl, Gerda Pieck, a stupid girl with  
outdated beliefs and a big mouth, mixing into political matters of which  
she understands nothing, only expressing what has been hammered into her by  
others, said that this should be so because women are too dumb anyway  
to understand about politics and therefore only vote same as their husbands.  
---Well, if she evaluates her contemporaries like this, this does not come  
as a surprise because this type of women is exactly what "they" raise,  
and she herself is just such a one.



At another time, in this same school, we were to write about  
"The Woman in the Third Reich" and I would 'give anything' if  
I still had the essay I wrote! The only thing I DO remember saying,  
was something like "my body belongs to me". My teacher gave me  
a half-way decent mark, but with this comment: "Please read Nora R.'s  
paper" (I am sure hers was written in the true new Nazi spirit!

10.11.1933

Durch Hitlers Rege ist mir wieder ganz zum Bewusstsein gekommen, dass ich doch auch ein Vaterland haben muss und wirklich als Vaterland Deutschland anschehe. Denn was hat mir nicht alles Deutschland gegeben. Wenn noch nicht einmal das Land, in dem man geboren ist, sein Vaterland ist, welches ist es dann? "Wer die Heimat nicht ehrt, ist des Glückes in der Heimat nicht wert." Wenn ich ins Ausland komme, werde ich doch stets sagen, ich bin Deutsche. Und in Deutschland selbst werde ich als Ausländer betrachtet! Wenn die Zeiten sich nicht geändert hätten, würde ich jetzt, wie auch früher, nicht in einen Jüdischen Verein gehen, wo nur Juden sind, und evtl. auch nur Mädchen. So viele jüdische Mädchen auf einmal könnte ich nicht vertragen. Und dann sind mir meistens diese, noch oft so naiven, reichen Mädchen unsympathisch. Gerne gehe ich nicht in so einen Verein. Wo ich andere Vereine gewohnt war, und auch andere Leute.

12.11.33

Heute ist die entscheidende Wahl! Abstimmung über den von der Regierung getanen Schritt in Genf, und zwar Austritt aus dem Völkerbund und Verlassen der Abrüstungskonferenz! Das richtige Ergebnis wird wohl Keiner erfahren, denn das Ausland weiß ja schließlich auch, dass es in Deutschland keine Pressefreiheit u. Meinungsfreiheit mehr gibt! Wenn Hitler nicht gegen die Juden wäre, könnte man schon viel eher für ihn sein! Aber mit ihrer Anschauung über Literatur, Kunst Theater, Film, Moral, Erziehung, Sitte, Religion und Tanz kann ich mich mit dem besten Willen nicht einverstanden erklären! Das geht so ganz gegen meine Auffassung. Da ich nun mit dieser, meiner Auffassung aufgewachsen bin, kann ich sie nicht ändern. Darüber hat man eben Weltanschauung, die schon so mit meinem ganzen 'Ich' verbunden ist, sodass ich meine Meinung über all diese Dinge nicht ändern kann. Dies sind doch Grundlagen für das Leben meines Ichs. Ich müsste ja meine ganze Lebensgrundlage ändern. Man kann es, - aber man wird wohl dann so ganz anders sein, --ein ganz anderer Kern mit derselben Schale.

13.11.33

(Aronheim)

Ich erfuhr heute, dass Inge im Ausland in Riga ist um dort Landwirtschaft zu erlernen. Waere das denn nicht eine ganz gute Idee gewesen, die Sache mit Inge zusammen zu unternehmen? Das ist ja eigentlich fuer Palästina gedacht! Wenn ich auch noch nicht gedenke nach Palästina zu gehen, gelernt ist gelernt. Mal brauche ich es ja doch. Passe ich denn eigentlich ins Büro, so wie ich bin, nein! Ich haette mir etwas Schoeneres gedacht! Aber, was denn? Vielleicht fotografieren? Theater waere vielleicht auch ganz nett fuer mich gewesen, aber jetzt ist es ja fuer Juden doch ausgeschlossen!

Heute kam mir in der Schule ein Buch in die Hand: Ueber Dichter der letzten Zeit (Expressionismus) Das scheint ein sehr gutes Buch zu sein! Leonard Frank, Ernst Toller, Morgenstern, Schnitzler, Werfel, etc. sind alle drin enthalten. Daran sieht man doch, dass sie mal sehr anerkannt sind, und wirklich zu den besten gehoert haben. So viele Juden sind darin! Dass die etwas koennen und dass die "Neuen Deutschen Dichter" lange nicht mit ihnen mitkommen, kann mir keiner abreden!

15.Nov.1933

Herr Lidner war da. Er ist sehr unterhaltend. Und da sieht man doch, dass Menschen, die etwas ueberlegen, auch auf Sachen stossen, die mit ihrer Weltanschauung nicht im Einklang stehen, aber grundlegende Probleme im Nationalsozialismus sind. Das, was Herr Lindner weiss, moechte ich auch Alles so klar wissen, um das jedem Nationalsozialist auch klar zu machen. Denn so muss ich so oft in der Schule ueber mich wegreden lassen ohne etwas Positives dagegen zu sagen. Wenn Mädchen ueberhaupt Nichts wissen, dann ist es fuer diese leicht, Alles zu glauben, was der Lehrer ihnen sagt, und fuer den Lehrer ist es auch leicht, es ihnen einzuhämmern, weil sie ja die Gegenmeinungen garnicht kennen! Was Herr Lidner alles von der Kirche, Ehe, Eingreifen in die persönliche Freiheit (Zwangsausüben)etc. erzählt, ist alles auch meine Meinung. Wenn er meint ich scheine Nationalsozialisten zu sein, so mag das wohl in Bezug auf

manche Ausserungen stimmen, aber wie gesagt, will doch der neue Staat sich seine Leute erst erziehen: das geht doch bei mir nicht mehr. Ich bin mit einer Weltanschauung schon so verwurzelt, dass es wohl im wahrsten Sinne des Wortes fuer mich ausgeschlossen ist, Nationalsozialistin zu sein. (abgesehen davon, dass ich JUdin bin.) Ich meine, mal werden sich ja viele Mädel überlegen, warum kann ich eigentlich ueber meinen Körper nicht selbst verfügen, usw. Es ist doch in dieser Beziehung ähnlich wie in Russland, wo die Kinder nicht den Eltern sondern dem Staat (fuer seine Idee und keine andere) gehören. So ist es hier auch! Kleine Jungs werden in Uniform gesteckt und ohne ihre eigene Auffassung zum Nationalsozialismus erzogen. Aber fur und wider könnte ich ja, wenn ich mir jede Kleinigkeit, die Jemand erzählt, auf die man selber nicht kommt, notiert hätte, stundenlang reden.

7.12.33

Wir sprachen in der Schule davon, dass wahrscheinlich die Frau im nationalsozialistischen Staat nicht mehr wählen dürfte. Ein Mädel aus der Klasse (Gerda Pieck), ein dummes Mädel mit ganz zurückgebliebenen Anschauungen, die sich immer mit grossem Mund in politische Dinge mengt, von denen sie nichts versteht und bloss das erzählt, was ihr von anderer Seite eingebläut wird, meinte natuerlich, das ist sehr richtig. Die Frau ist ja doch zu dum, um etwas von Politik zu verstehen und wählt ja doch nur das, was ihr Mann wählt. Ja, wenn sie ihr eigenes Geschlecht so einschätzt! Aber solche Frauen erziehen sie sich jetzt ja heran! Solche ist sie ja selbst.

Wie oft habe ich schon gewünscht, ich hätte noch meinen Aufsatz aus derselben (Schul)Zeit "Die Frau im Dritten Reich". Das wäre noch heute interessant zu lesen, was meine Meinung war. Nur an einen Satz erinnere ich mich: "Mein Körper gehört mir". Mein Lehrer gab mir eine ziemlich gute 'Nummer', aber mit dem Hinweis: "Bitte Nora's Aufsatz lesen". Das war wohl ganz im Sinn der neuen Nazi Denkart!

Puerto de la Cruz-Tenerife  
SPAIN

Mr. Martel  
C/ Muela, 10  
Puerto de la Cruz-Tenerife  
SPAIN

GERMANY REVISITED (German 'title' Eine Reise in die Vergangenheit.)  
GERMANY REVISITED Part I if you want it in German, let me know

- 1981 on the whole was a good year for me! (I also turned 65)
- In the spring I finished the semester at the Junior College with with all 'A's.
- In June I saw my twin grandchildren for the first time at age 7 mos.
- On August 28 I flew from Wisconsin to Philadelphia and attended the wedding of my youngest son which brought about the first get-together of my whole family; another son and daughter as well as my ex-husband--in 13 years!

But, - although I did not know it then...AUGUST 13 was the most important date. I am not sure in this can be categorized a serendipity but I had more than one occasion to learn that so much in our lives happens by chance, being at the right place at the right time. August 13th was one of those times where it all started, culminating on October 17th in Berlin, Germany, where I attended my first school reunion in almost fifty years! -- an event which would not have happened for me if I had not tuned in to

Ted Koppel's ABC NIGHTLINE  
way up in Northern Wisconsin in my cabin in the woods!  
Although I am a former Berliner having emigrated to the USA in 1937 I was not sure that August 13 was the 20th anniversary of the BERLIN WALL. But can you imagine my surprise and excitement when after Ted Koppel announced switching over via satellite to Berlin to talk to the commissioner and an ABC reporter, named Robert Loehner, I immediately recognized Mr. Loehner and exclaimed: "This is Bobby, my high school sweetheart" and turning to a friend said: "when we were 13 years old we did folkdancing together and also because we were both small for our age played the part of dwarves in a school play". I had no idea of Mr. Loehner's whereabouts. If my memory serves me correctly I last heard from him over 40 years ago when he was a student at Princeton. It is no surprise, however, that he should be a journalist/reporter in Berlin following in his father's footsteps. Mr. Loehner, Sr. was an ABC reporter in Berlin during the 1930's, which is why Bobby, although an American citizen, attended the same school I did in Berlin.

The next day I wrote to Mr. Koppel asking him to help me get in touch with Mr. Loehner because I had already planned a trip to Germany for September. When I only received a routine postcard acknowledgement, needless to say, I was very disappointed. I wrote again giving my address and phone number in New York City prior to my departure but unfortunately left September 5 for Frankfurt, Germany, without any leads!

Gerda Manel  
C-LA Marina #10  
Puerto de La Cruz  
Tenerife, Spain

Only because the German Travel Office sent me the most colorful brochure of Oberstaufen, a small resort and spa (a 6 hour train ride from Frankfurt) in Southern Bavaria, by mistake, instead of the one I had asked for regarding cell rejuvenation treatments, did I make a random decision to make it my destination. I probably would not have chanced going there alone and without a hotel reservation if I were not fluent in the German language.

From the moment I stepped off the train and found myself on a platform with flower boxes and the view of mountains I knew I had come to the right place! It was a lovely sunny Sunday afternoon and having coffee and pastry in an outdoor cafe means definitely I am back in my native country. It is more than the cup of coffee and cake, it is a life style reminiscent of my earlier days in Germany. It was hard to imagine that in less than 24 hours one could leave behind the skyscrapers of New York and be transplanted into this Bavarian fairytale scenery of green hills, mountains and cobblestone streets flanked with chalet type houses with gorgeous flowers on each window sill or balcony! It is such a beautiful area (not far from the Austrian and Swiss border) that I hated to leave after 3 weeks and extended my stay to 5 weeks, -the first 3 of which were spent on a ca. 400 calories reducing diet, its primary purpose being a body detoxification by eliminating all protein, salt and fat from this carbohydrate diet. Note: 3/4 l. dry white wine (rich in vitamins and bioelements) one day and 1/4 l. another is part of this diet. The "Schrotkur" so named after Johann Schrot (S'kur' meaning cure) who invented it 150 years ago under the slogan "REINIGT DIE ACKER UND IHR WERDET BESSERE FRUCHTE ERNTEN"....Cleanse the earth and you will reap a better harvest,

The principle of the 'Schrotkur' lies in the close to fasting diet, changing from 'dry' days to 'drinking' days and the 17 sweat packs (administered at the ungodly hour of 5 a.m. to 7 a.m.) which facilitate the metabolism process by stimulating blood circulation through skin and organs.

After three weeks of this strict regime from which I never faltered inspite of the many temptations that surround you, such as people sitting outdoors or to be seen through glass fronts eating pastries, icecream, or seeing a cheese store and many varieties of dark, whole-grain German breads to go with cheese or sausage! I studied the daily, most reasonable menus posted outside the restaurants, in anticipation of my non-diet days 3 weeks from hence! I may as well state right here that I used great will power and did not go wild or eat indiscriminately when the three weeks were up. No, I stayed within the guidelines which called for moderation: only white meat, no fried food, little carbohydrates, no salt or fat, however the after diet should be rich in fresh fruits and vegetables, and the evening meal light. Only the smell of a freshly baked "Pflaumenkuchen" (fresh plum cake-German style) last of the season - was too much and too good to resist!!

For the 4th and 5th week of my stay I moved from the hotel and its most impersonal, unfriendly, owner/couple into a room in a private home, and being the only guest, the landlady and I became good friends. Imagine, only paying \$7.00 per day with breakfast. It turned out a lucky break for me in more than one way. For one thing, Leni Hoelzler, my landlady cooked for both of us. All I had to do was to buy the food, such as lots of fresh vegetables, fruit and salad greens which I was craving. My vacation expenses, therefore, were quite minimal and I was tempted to stay on 3 more months just so I could experience Oberstaufen as a winter resort! But I did not have the proper wardrobe, not even for the cold October days I encountered in Berlin.

Lucky for me I did not sprain my foot while staying at the hotel but was under the loving care of Mrs. Hoelzler, who knew just what to do when I limped in after having walked almost 3 miles (from the spot along the highway where I tripped over a rock) to reach my home base; I asked for icepacks but she brought out her best "Schnaps" 45% gin; dipped a rag in it which when wrapped around my ankle and foot was ice cold! She watched over me carefully making sure I would not get up for at least 2 days; on the 4th day to keep me from walking around in town I decided to join a guided all-day bus tour to St.Gallen/Switzerland. I had a few anxious moments when the driver called for passports ~~as~~ (we crossed not only the Austrian border but also the Swiss border)...and I had forgotten mine! The driver walked to the border ~~post office~~ and apparently got a blanket o.k. to pass (without the guards coming on board). When he got back, he turned to me and said: "Remember, I don't know that you have no passport".

I must stop digressing from my primary purpose of story, namely Ted Koppel and Berlin.

Shortly after arriving in Bavaria I went to the local post office to find a Berlin phonebook (in Germany the telephone service is run by the government post office.) I found a Robert Lochner, took a chance and wrote to him. A few days later he called me, calling me by my former nickname "Mops" (a small, rotund but cute dog) and briefly gave me a resume of his life and career over the past 45 years! He later told me that he followed this up with a long letter which unfortunately I never received. Then,--- and here comes the good part-- he told me that the yearly school reunion was to take place in 4 weeks, on October 17th. If I had not been able to locate Robert, I would never have known about the reunion. Since I was never on their mailing list, this was to be my first time. How exciting a prospect.

Part II

How fortunate that my return ticket had an 'open return', so, the October 17th date was no problem. Eddy suggested that I contact the Public Relations Office of the Berlin Senate as he was certain I would qualify for the Berlin hospitality program established for former Berliners who had been forced to leave Germany (Berlin) under the Hitler regime. When I called, the lady was already familiar with my name as a file had been started when I asked to be considered as 'a candidate' in 1978. The West Berlin Senate has brought many Jewish people from all parts of the world, paying their airplane fares, one week of hotel accommodations plus spending money! However, although I am almost 65, I was not old enough yet to be entitled to having my airfare paid; they have such a long waiting list and are presently working on persons born in 1906!! I think that Mr. Lochner's job with R.I.A.S. (Radio in the American Sector) and his being the president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Berlin might have paved the way for me, resulting in a reservation in a very fine hotel being made for me, for one week's stay. Everyone in this program gets a personal interview, 2 theater tickets of your choice, a sightseeing tour, and at the end of the week a lunch (on a one to one basis) with an official of the Berlin Information Center, at which time you are given a Berlin folder containing many fine booklets and pamphlets about Berlin and also (in both German and English) a brochure depicting the places and memorials where victims of Nazism who took part in the resistance movement are honored. (By the way, the \$80 spending money came in very handy for extra theater visits, cab fares as well as a few visits to a Café.)

The day after I arrived in Berlin (an 11 hour train ride from Bavaria) Robert and I met for tea at my hotel. This being our first meeting in almost fifty years he tried to give me a brief résumé of his life and career which included being the interpreter for Lucius Clay and later for President Kennedy, as well as the diplomatic service, a correspondent for ABC and the Berlin representative of the American Chamber of Commerce.

Then out came the amazing little notebook!--From his briefcase he extracted a notebook saying: "I bet you have no idea what an impression you made on me when I was about 12 years old." The small pages were filled with caricatures depicting him, me (then called 'Mops' meaning a small, cuddly dog) and his rival named "Haller". Then followed several small pages from his diary dated 1930, depicting the 'on' and 'off' 'love affair' and his finally 'getting fed up with the whole thing'!

amazing that he kept this all these years! At the Reunion he got up in front of the microphone and after introducing me as one of the few visitors from abroad he proceeded, to my surprise, to read from this 1930 diary. His Berlin friends were surprised to see him depart from his usual seriousness.

October 17, 1981, the day of the 'Reunion'. Of course I presumed Robert would pick me up to take me to the reunion. Wrong! He suggested I take a taxi. However, having confidence in my ability to get around on public transportation I was also looking forward to the ride on top of the double decker bus which would take me through familiar streets, - mostly along the Kurfürstendamm (called, Ku-Damm for short), a wide street with many shops, restaurants, hotels and Cafes. With a nostalgic feeling I passed the street where I lived as a child and I remembered the square where every Saturday I would shop for my mother in the open-air food market. I also was in Berlin in 1976 at which time I wanted to show my grownup daughter where I lived and where I went to school; one could say: "where my roots were"! Yes, although I had to leave my homeland at the age of twenty, whenever I return (the first time, after more than 35 years) I feel very much

'at home' ethnologically. I found that most American Jews cannot understand that I consider myself German first, then Jewish. As a matter of fact I find myself on the defensive when I relate to American Jews that I made many (gentile) ~~friends~~ <sup>other women</sup> friends in Germany. In fact, I could not tell them that I actually feel more in-tune with <sup>them</sup> them than with most Jewish people, especially those I have met in Miami. They do not believe me when I tell them that there is less anti-semitism in Germany than here in the USA!

One of the definitions in the dictionary for 'roots' is: 'foundation; and growing up in Germany definitely was the foundation of my ethnic and emotional personality.'

I had no trouble finding my way on busses or subways; I still remembered the names of most streets and squares.

I must admit though that while walking toward the designated meeting place I felt some trepidation of having to walk in 'cold', - by myself. Fortunately, however, maturity and advanced age brought me self-confidence. To meet new people and new situations without feeling threatened, and I am basically an outgoing person. Among the ca. 75 persons already present I spotted Robert quickly and it was not too long before I was approached by two men who knew who I was by my former maiden name, Gerda Freund. I addressed them with the formal 'You' (Sie) as customary in Germany they corrected me quickly, insisting we call each other "Du"; after all, schoolmates 50 yrs. ago!

(5)

Part II (Cont'd)

At another table I was introduced to several ladies (approximately in my age group) one of which, ... , actually was my classmate and as soon as she mentioned her maiden name, Hilde Melchert, we happily recognized each other! As it turned out, she and I were the only ones present from our class of 1932! As soon as I heard the other lady's maiden name, - Renate Papcke - 2 years my senior, I remembered her right away too. (Under other circumstances I would not have recognized Hilde, now with dyed reddish short hair as I remembered her with long dark-blond pigtails.) She mentioned that she was a friend of Lilli Palmer, also an alumni of 'our' school! There was not enough time to answer everyone's questions as 'Kuffi' and Robert asked for our attention over the microphone. I felt this great need to tell everyone just how by chance my first presence at a reunion had come about, so I asked for permission to take the microphone. I had no trouble speaking in German except for one phrase when I wanted to tell them that ABC Nightline "switched" over to Berlin" and Robert gave me the word: "umschalten". I felt compelled to go on and tell them that I never have forgotten the smell of spice cookies upon entering the "mess hall" every Monday afternoon during the four weeks before Christmas, celebrating the advent, combined with the fragrance of fresh pine wreaths and the many burning candles. (While I am writing this, I can't help thinking of the "Schmalzbrote" and how we always grabbed for them hungrily, for our 2nd breakfast, customary in Germany at about 11 a.m. (made from pork lard, flavored with fried onions)

"Looking back at my life I know for sure now," ... , "... that the years I spent in the 'Waldschule' (School of the Woods) were the happiest and most carefree of my life. I am sure none of us were aware of that fact then." Thus I ended my speech. When reading the various circulars, lovingly published twice a year and mailed to over 550 alumnis in 15 countries, I realized that most of them shared this feeling.

We then went to the auditorium where we were privileged to see two movies filmed by former students during the '30's and 40's. How exciting to relive those wonderful school days through the films. With everyone 'high on nostalgia' Kuffi had no problem with her "hat" (money) collection! After the movie we went back upstairs where to my surprise a buffet was available; and, in an adjacent room a collection of foto albums was kept for viewing and reminiscing (kept under lock and key until the next annual gathering). Unfortunately my own school fotos did not arrive from

*The meeting had been great*

Part III (Conclusion)

For weeks I have been trying to find the right "heading" for part III consulting others more capable of 'writing', yet, so far I still have not found the one word which properly expresses what I found to be the culmination of this whole experience. (Is it 'serendipity', the icing on the cake, the bonus?) What then would best describe the good things that resulted from my having been present at this reunion, such as

1. list of names with addresses and birth dates of former students. (Before leaving my hotel I made out a list of all my classmates (1926 - 1932) and although this was the first time I thought about their names in over 40 years I recollect almost 20 out of 28. This was later confirmed when I returned to Miami and found my 'Poesie Album', a booklet in which classmates write verses to be remembered by you in later years.

2. semi-annual past newsletters to read and reminisce. <sup>wpm</sup>

It was through this list that I initiated the revival of contacts with many former schoolmates, especially by sending out surprise birthday greetings with Xerox copies of their 1931 verses out of my album, and, in some cases even photos of them dating back to our school days. The many wonderful letters I received in return were glowing proof that a common bond still exists and that none had ever forgotten this carefree and happy part of their younger years. The letters were warm, sincere and full of friendship, giving brief accounts of each person's life. Imagine the thrill of unexpectedly receiving reproductions of b/w photos of a 1932 class outing, with you on it! One woman in particular (Hilde Klare, nee Melchert) who actually was the only person from my grade present at the Berlin meeting just wrote me a second letter which would make you think that we had been close friends over the past decades as it is written with great compassion, care and concern unusual in a person who had no contact with you in the past 50 years and even more rare in most persons I have met since!

Robert Lochner (living in Berlin) still is very close with many of his high school friends. This is undeniable proof how strong friendships formed in high school can be. (if you are not driven out of your homeland!) Another most reassuring and heartwarming feeling: is how many of my non-Jewish German classmates have responded (as if there never had been a Hitler). 'One of my former classmates, now a retired Admiral of the Navy, told me that in the '30's in order to avoid having to join the Hitler Youth he joined the Marines.'

What is wrong with "going back" in time into the land of youth if it evokes only happy memories and makes new friends of old ones? (You might add something about revisiting old haunts makes life richer than we could have ever imagined. - To end with a question seems a little anticlimactic to me.) Please this is only suggestion.

Miami until 2 days after our reunion. When they arrived I immediately called Horst and Eva and asked if I could come over to share the excitement of viewing these precious fotos with them, especially since there were a few with Horst's brother, Ernst, who was a classmate of mine.

At this point I'd like to mention that the task of publishing, editing and mailing the semi-annual 'Waldschulbrief' (circular) lies with the following dedicated people: Robert(Lochner), Eva and Horst. Since my emigration in 1937 I have had no contact whatsoever with schoolmates, therefore, was never on their mailing list(re-compiled after the war), never knew of any annual get-together. When Eva gave me four past issues, she could not possibly know how many hours of happy and satisfying reading they provided. As I recall, I spent most of the night, after returning to the hotel from the Reunion, reading. So many high school memories were evoked, and occasionally a familiar name or two and their whereabouts came up. After the gathering and reading of the circulars there is one thing that strikes you and that is this definite common bond between former students, no matter what their age. It stems from shared experiences and unforgettable memories of 'our' school; the school which in retrospect is unanimously described as 'unique'!

While watching the movies it did not seem as if 50 years had passed, yet, when people recount events in their lives, especially during and after the war there is no doubt that almost a lifetime has passed.

When I was 62 I enrolled in a  
Creative Writing Course at the  
Florida University where we were to  
write about "My Most Memorable Person"

March 1970

When I burn a candle to ~~commemorate~~ my mother's untimely death (only 52 yrs. old!) in a concentration camp in Germany, this is definitely not the only time I think of her with love and admiration.

How unfortunate that we have to become mature adults before we can appreciate the good qualities in our parents. Judging from my diary as a teenager I had the same complaints commonly shared by most growing up teenagers. The type of negative feelings really have not changed over the past 4 decades as they relate to restrictions vs. freedom in dealing with dating and/or boys.

Over the past few years I had many occasions to tell my children of the many attributes of my mother who I believe was right in step with the times, if not ahead of her time with her views in many areas. I am convinced that it was her influence and example that made me the person I am. I learned (or inherited?) my unbiased views, lifestyle and open mind from her. I discovered through my diary that when writing about people, real or imaginary, such as in a play, I never judged and was always aware that there are two sides to everything. My sense of tolerance, fair judgement without prejudice prevailed.

My mother introduced me to the Junior League for Human Rights, on two occasions sent me to a camp where <sup>in one</sup> I clearly remember doing calisthenics (in the nude) at the beach, pre-teen boys and girls together and the other time in an adult nudist camp, all I remember is being cold either running or playing volleyball.

While health food stores have become popular in this country not more than maybe 8-10 years ago, I can remember doing the weekly shopping mostly from a health food store as far back as 1930. And it was just about that time when my mother was doing research on

soyabeans with a doctor friend of hers who ran a vegetarian  
and raw food health resort to which I remember she also took me. <sup>when I was</sup>  
16.  
It is also only within the last 10 years or so that the soyabean  
has become so widely discussed for its benefits, and yet it was  
45 years ago that my mother watched them grow on our windowsill.  
Among my mother's many accomplishments which included speaking  
several languages, accompanying herself on the piano while  
singing in Italian, or while I was practicing my ballet routines,  
at the age of 50 she taught herself shorthand in order to enable  
her to correspond with me in America since writing long letters  
in longhand would have tired her, yet her handwriting was executed  
with the same precision as embroidery. Learning shorthand by  
yourself is not such an exceptional accomplishment but when one  
considers that she switched from one system to another, that is  
remarkable. She had never been in an English speaking country,  
however her knowledge of English was good enough to write to  
me. After only a short stay in Denmark, she simply learned Danish  
from newspapers.

I vaguely remember my mother doing some social volunteer work. Also, - that  
she was, at one time or another member of the Berlin Opera House's choir. That is probably how I  
became enrolled in that opera house's ballet school and also performing in several performances. <sup>at</sup> <sup>the</sup>

I feel with her brains she could have gone far in a career  
and be more fulfilled especially since my parents were divorced  
after only a few years of marriage but in those days a woman did  
not work if there was no dire financial need.

It was not easy for her to have to raise me without a father,  
especially one who was living on another continent.  
I am sorry now that I gave her a bad time as a teenager.

<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>1</sup> under the baton of no less than.... Bruno Walter! and Pres. von Hindenburg in the audience.  
I was about 12 or 13 yrs. old.

I had to leave Germany at the age of 21 and leave her behind never to see her again! Unfortunately all her letters to me were destroyed in a flood in California. But I treasure a few I still have, especially the one where she said, in English: "My dear child, please let me know what I did wrong so that I can do better when we get together again."

*new yr*

My dearest child: How can you say you wish Pappa had never married me! You yourself said that all what happens must happen, - that everything has a reason, that it will build our character. I think that unhappy marriage was also necessary; I never regretted it, and if only for the result: You, my child!

~~Another letter~~  
The same one and only letter I have contains<sup>s</sup> the following, also in faultless English asking me: Did you meanwhile think it over what I did wrong to you. I like to know to make it better when we get together again.

April 1980xx 1979  
Having recently enrolled in the college Humanities course(at age 62) little did I know how much I would enjoy this history of art and music course especially when it became obvious how familiar I was with many paintings and classical music compositions. When I look around at my younger classmates (for the most part blacks) who ha've not had the opportunity brought up by a mother who appreciated the Fine Arts of dance, music and the theater as well as literature.

Apr. 1980 In my social science class our teacher said education should be more on a one to one basis and based more on experience (ing) than textbook knowledge. This made me think of my highschool in the wooded suburbs of Berlin(50 years ago!) Indeed a most unique school even for today's standards. In the summer classes were held in open air classrooms, wooden walls on 3 sides but big openings(no windows) on one side. Sometimes we ~~had~~ had class just sitting on the ground outdoors. Since we spent the whole day at school(meals served in an open-air messhall) we had a supervised rest period from 2-3:30 at which time afterwards hot chocolate or milk and buttered hard rolls were served. (that is, after the rest) We each had a deckchair and could read and study but not talk. In our free time some of us tended a small garden plot where we could plant sweet peas, radishes, etc. Every 2 weeks it was some group's turn to do yardwork. Afternoons were also for various athletic activities and swimming.

The fact that this high school(not private,-municipal) was the only co-educational school in Berlin was another reason it was so special. It was much less formal than other German high schools which were either for boys or for girls. When I graduated and went on to a school of commerce it was difficult for me to adjust to the more formal environment and a class of girls only. In retrospect I have my dear mother to thank for entering me in such a progressive school, and making it possible for me now to look back at my high school years as probably the happiest time of my life.



**End of Gerda Martel Collection**

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